



COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2020 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR APPLICATION
COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATION

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

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Please read all materials before preparing and submitting the application. Failure to follow the instructions and requirements described in this Request for Application (RFA) may result in the disqualification of the application.

**NOTICE REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF CONFIDENTIAL, PROPRIETARY,
TRADE SECRET, OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION IN AN APPLICATION**

Please take notice of the following:

If it is necessary for Respondent to include proprietary or otherwise confidential information in its application or other submitted information, Respondent must clearly mark and label all confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged material in 14 point bold font or higher on each page as it appears, and identify the specific exception to disclosure in the Texas Public Information Act (PIA) for each specific piece of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information. Additionally, all confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information must be segregated in a separate and discrete section of the application, which must be able to be conveniently separated and detached from the other sections of the application. Failure to properly label, identify, and segregate any confidential, proprietary, trade secret or other privileged information in the application may result in all such information or material being disclosed as public information. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information is not acceptable, and shall make the entire application subject to release under the PIA. In order to initiate the process of seeking an Attorney General opinion on the release of confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information, the specific provisions of the application that are considered by Respondent to be confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged and confidential must be clearly labeled and segregated as described above. Any information which is not clearly identified as confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged shall be deemed to be subject to disclosure pursuant to the PIA.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note), as [amended under Section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 \(Public Law 113-79\)](#), and as further amended by [Section 10107 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 \(Public Law 115-334\)](#), collectively referred to herein as the “Farm Bill”, authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make grants to be used by state departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). The SCBGP is implemented under 7 CFR Part 1291.

The purpose of the SCBGP is to increase consumption of specialty crops and improve the competitiveness of specialty crop producers. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Refer to the following website for a list of common specialty crops: [‘What is a Specialty Crop?’](#).

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is authorized by [§12.002](#) and [§12.007](#) of the Texas Agriculture Code to encourage the proper development and promotion of agriculture, to investigate the pests and diseases of crops grown in this state, and to supervise the protection of fruit trees, shrubs, and plants as provided by law.

In accordance with aforementioned State and Federal statutes, and for 2020 SCBGP funding consideration, TDA will prepare and submit, for approval by the Secretary of Agriculture, a State Plan to carry out the purpose of the SCBGP.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

TDA is accepting grant applications to consider for the 2020 State Plan to the United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) for projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, including

- Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
- Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crop;
- Expanding availability and access to specialty crops;
- Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers; and
- For such other purposes determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with specialty crop stakeholders and relevant State departments of agriculture

SCBGP funds will be made available to Texas from the USDA 2020 fiscal year budget. Although USDA-AMS has not officially released SCBGP funds to the states, TDA anticipates approximately \$2.1 million will be available for Texas projects. This figure is subject to change upon the formal Notice of Funding posted by USDA-AMS.

To be considered for funding, applicants must: be an eligible entity, meet the requirements as set forth in this RFA, and provide a complete grant application by the stated deadline.

PROJECTED TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Application Availability	January 2020
Application Deadline	February 27, 2020
Preliminary Selection	April 2020
Selected Projects submitted to USDA	May 2020
Award Announcements	October 2020
Start Date of Project	December 1, 2020
End Date of Project	September 30, 2022

ELIGIBILITY

Responses will be accepted from Texas state agencies, universities, institutions, and producer, industry, or community-based organizations involved with, or that promote specialty crops.

- Grant applications must demonstrate that they will enhance the competitiveness of a Texas specialty crop industry.
- Grant funds may only be used for activities benefiting specialty crops.
- Grant funds must benefit more than one individual, institution or organization.
- Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual.

FUNDING AREAS AND PRIORITIES

TDA encourages applicants to develop projects to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the following five (5) key focus areas affecting the specialty crop industry: Food Safety, Nutrition, Plant Health, Value-Added and Industry Development, and Marketing. Applicants are responsible for selecting the key focus area that best fits their project.

Research projects in all focus areas should be applied research and results should be available to producers, processors and/or consumers within one (1) to two (2) years of the grant term date. Projects with a large research component will be evaluated on their ability to document and transfer results to the industry.

TDA may choose to use a portion of the funds for projects conducted internally, including, but not limited to, outreach activities, nutrition, regulatory or marketing. Internal projects will also be evaluated in the competitive process.

A. Food Safety

TDA will consider projects that assist production of specialty crop agricultural operations in continuing to supply the safest food in the world.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Assisting entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices,” “Good Handling Practices,” or “Good Manufacturing Practices”
- § Researching new methods to improve food safety
- § Marketing or outreach to specialty crop producers/distributors regarding new or upcoming food safety requirements

B. Nutrition

TDA will consider projects that improve access to and consumption of specialty crops. Ensuring access to healthy foods in underserved low-income areas of Texas and increasing Texans’ access to and consumption of fruits, vegetables and tree nuts is a key strategy to improve human health.

All projects must increase the competitiveness of specialty crops and clearly demonstrate a benefit to the specialty crop industry. TDA will consider projects that integrate human health and nutrition into applications that show a direct impact on specialty crops.

- Food Security

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Increasing participation in under-utilized federal nutrition assistance programs
- § Developing innovative projects that support local and regional food systems
- § Improving access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in ways that foster self-reliance, enhance dignity and assure environmental sustainability

- Healthy Eating

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Increasing consumption of specialty crops among all populations
- § Developing farm-to-fork networks that include schools, worksites, retail, and restaurant outlets to connect local agriculture with nearby communities
- § Promoting and/or demonstrating the health benefits of Texas specialty crops

C. Plant Health

TDA will consider applications that address pests and diseases that affect the production of Texas’ specialty crops. This includes research related to the probability and impact of invasive pest, disease and weed threats to specialty crops and research to develop tools to detect, eradicate and control pests and disease. Results should be available to producers, processors or consumers within one to two years of grant term date.

TDA will also consider projects that enhance the conservation or improve the quality of agricultural land, water, habitat and biodiversity, as well as, applications that address specialty crops’ contribution to adaptation and/or mitigation of climate change.

- Plant Health and Pest Challenges

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Enhancing the speed and reliability of detection
- § Developing new tools for eradication
- § Developing plants resistant to pests and disease
- § Evaluating organic and sustainable practices

- **Environmental Concerns and Conservation**

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Evaluating water use efficiency in regards to current drought conditions and for climate change adaptation
- § Assisting growers to adapt to climate change by conducting research and demonstrating the implementation of strategies where technologies are already available - especially water use efficiency and invasive pest detection, control and management
- § Accelerating implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP) for water conservation and efficiency, including development of a BMP manual for specific specialty crops

D. Value Added and Industry Development

TDA will consider projects that add to the value of specialty crops, or develop new ideas, tools or information that increase the benefit to the industry.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Providing support for development of value added processing facilities
- § Strengthening specialty crop agricultural career technical education through establishment of certification programs for critical job training
- § Improvement of distribution methods both domestically and internationally
- § Evaluating industry feasibility or development of a new industry
- § Conducting market research of consumer preference
- § Researching a new tool to improve marketability
- § Developing new and improved specialty crop variety/use, technology advancements and growing season extensions in an effort to diversify and strengthen specialty crop production

E. Marketing

TDA will consider projects that improve consumers' knowledge and understanding of specialty crops through education and outreach. Additionally, TDA will consider projects that increase or develop long-term sales, consumption and competitiveness of specialty crop products, including international marketing and trade activities.

- **Agriculture Education/Outreach**

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- § Promoting Texas specialty crops and strengthening the connection between specialty crops and agriculture

- § Extending science-based information to specialty crop growers and other key stakeholders
 - § Educating consumers about Texas' specialty crops and agriculture
 - § Reconnecting communities with specialty crop production
 - § Educating the public about the identity and threat of invasive species to Texas specialty crops
 - § Promoting/marketing specialty crop certification and/or education program opportunities that further enhance critical job skills
- Market Enhancement and Promotion
 - Project examples include, but are not limited to:*
 - § Conducting statewide promotion and awareness activities of specialty crops
 - § Targeting specialty crop marketing concepts on the unique characteristics of local and regional areas such as culture, geography, history, and types of agricultural production
 - § Developing cooperative marketing and promotions such as cross-menu promotions of specialty crops
 - § Marketing agritourism as it relates to specialty crop
 - § Creating innovative consumer/trade promotions in foreign markets

FUNDING PARAMETERS, AWARD INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATION

- State, local or Indian tribal governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities will be subject to 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
- Applicants may be awarded funding at varying levels depending on the nature of the project.
- Applications must demonstrate strong justification for the requested budget, as well as, the potential for providing significant demonstrable benefits to Texas specialty crops.
- Where more than one (1) application on an eligible research topic is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between applicants or revision/adjustment to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.
- TDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications submitted. TDA is under no legal or other obligation to execute a grant on the basis of a response submitted to this Request for Applications. TDA shall not pay for any costs incurred by any entity in responding to this RFA.
- Public announcements and written notifications will be made to all applicants and their affiliated agencies, organizations, or institutions. Favorable decisions will indicate the amount of award, duration of the grant, and any special conditions associated with the project.

TERM OF FUNDING OR DURATION OF PROJECTS

Selected projects will be funded for work that must be completed between December 1, 2020 and September 30, 2022.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for funding a complete grant application package must be received by the stated deadline. A complete grant application package includes: 1) Signed Grant Application Form; 2) Project Profile; and 3) Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire. To ensure a fair and equitable competition, the format required for the Project Profile is single-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins, and no more than 18 pages long (excluding any supporting documentation – i.e. letters of support, publications, supporting data, etc.).

Grant Application Package—Interested applicants must provide all of the following information:

1. **Grant Application Form** – Includes basic project and contact information. Must be signed. The form is found → [here](#). The Project Profile, Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire and any additional supporting data are upload through the Grant Application Form.
2. **Project Profile** - Must address the following information:
 - a. Primary Applicant
 - b. Partner Organization(s)—list name(s) of organization(s) assisting on the project
 - c. Project Title
 - d. Duration of Project
 - e. Project Summary
 - f. Project Purpose
 - g. External Project Support
 - h. Work Plan
 - i. Expected Measurable Outcomes
 - j. Budget Narrative/Justification
3. **Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire** – Must be signed.
 - a. Copy or hyperlink to applicant's written accounting policies and procedures.
 - b. Copy or hyperlink to applicant's written internal controls for Federal awards.
 - c. Copy or hyperlink to applicant audits conducted within the last five fiscal years.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION INFORMATION

An administrative review will be conducted by TDA to determine whether the applicant was adequately responsive to the requirements of this Request for Application. TDA will take into consideration the status of any open project's progress.

Based on the application requirements set forth above, a review team including internal and external experts and/or stakeholders will competitively review all applications, by key focus area, to evaluate each project's ability to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Projects that are selected to be included in TDA's State Plan must show a direct benefit to specialty crops. Applications will be scored using the criteria set forth in the Application Evaluation Sheet.

Preference may be given to projects showing specialty crop industry support and/or collaboration.

RISK ASSESSMENT & MONITORING

In accordance with [2 CFR §200.331 \(b\)](#), TDA will evaluate each awarded Applicant's risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the grant award for the purposes of determining the appropriate monitoring.

To evaluate this risk and determine the appropriate level of monitoring, the applicant must complete and submit the Accounting System & Financial Capability Questionnaire as part of the grant application package by the deadline stated in this RFA. Responses from this questionnaire will be inserted into a program risk assessment tool.

The risk assessment is based on a score and goes from 1 to 100 points and takes into consideration the following information:

- Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire
- Recent history of performance with TDA grant programs (any open grants and grants closed within the last five years)
- Alignment of the pending application with the statutory authority of the grant program as well as program regulations and policies
- Audits, reviews, and/or reported findings, if applicable

CONTACT INFORMATION AND SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Applicants must submit one complete, signed grant application package; the Grant Application Form, Project Profile, and Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, February 27, 2020.** Applications may not be supplemented after the submission deadline. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the timely delivery of all required materials.

For questions regarding submission of the application and/or TDA requirements, please contact TDA's Grants Office at (512) 463-9932, or by email at Grants@TexasAgriculture.gov.

Online Submission

Completed applications must be **received by TDA before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Thursday, February 27, 2020**. The online system will date stamp the submission for receipt documentation purposes. Click the following link to access and submit the online Application Form: [Application Form](#)

Instructions:

- 1) Complete online application form. The online application includes a section for applicant contact information (organization, primary contact, secondary contact, and authorized official) and a section for General Project Information (New/Continuation project, Key Focus Area, Type of Specialty Crop, and Target Audience).
- 2) Sign the online form in the signature block provided.
- 3) Attach the Project Profile, Accounting System and Financial Capability Questionnaire and any supporting documents.
- 4) Submit completed/signed application.

An automated receipt email will be sent from the online system indicating the application has been received. TDA program staff will also send a separate email as soon as administratively possible with an application ID number.

GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Awarded applicants (Grantees) will be responsible for the conduct of the project supported by the SCBGP and for the results described in the application. Each Grantee shall monitor the day-to-day performance of the grant project to assure adherence to statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions. The Grantee must carry out the activities described in the approved scope of work.

The Grantee will be accountable for documenting the use of grant funds and must ensure funds are used solely for authorized purposes. The Grantee must ensure:

- Funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project.
- Funds are not used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of the grant agreement or applicable law.
- All budget and performance reports are completed in a timely manner.

Each Grantee must ensure they have an adequate accounting system in place and good internal controls to ensure expenditures and reimbursements are properly reported to TDA. Complete records relating to the project, including accounting records, financial records, progress reports and other documentation, must be maintained for three (3) years after the conclusion of the project or longer if required by TDA.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will be required to submit periodic performance reports. Reporting timelines are incorporated into the grant agreement. As part of TDA's ongoing monitoring of grant funds, Grantees must demonstrate programmatic and financial progress toward achieving project goals. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in withholding requests for reimbursement and/or termination of the award.

Performance Reports must be in a narrative format prescribed by TDA and detail the accomplishments of the project objectives for that period.

An Annual Performance Report is due each year of performance on the State Plan to USDA. Grantees will provide an annual report in a narrative format prescribed by TDA, documenting the accomplishments of their project for that period.

The Final Performance Report is due thirty (30) days after project completion, or termination of the Grant Agreement, whichever occurs first. This report must be in a narrative format prescribed by TDA. Similar to the annual performance reports, the final performance reports will be provided to USDA documenting Texas' progress on the 2020 State Plan.

The following schedule is a sample of the reporting terms:

GRANTEE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS		
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program		
Contract Term: 12/1/2020 - 9/30/2022		
	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Reporting Period</u>
Performance Report 1	3/10/2021	12/1/2020 - 2/28/2021
Performance Report 2	6/10/2021	3/1/2021 - 5/31/2021
Performance Report 3	9/10/2021	6/1/2021 - 8/31/2021
Annual Performance Report	11/1/2021	12/1/2020 - 9/30/2021
Performance Report 4	1/10/2022	10/1/2021 - 12/31/2021
Performance Report 5	4/10/2022	1/1/2022 - 3/31/2022
Performance Report 6	7/10/2022	4/1/2022 - 6/30/2022
Final Performance Report	11/1/2022	12/1/2021 - 9/30/2022

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

A. Payment. Grant funds will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis. Grantees will be required to submit payment requests at least quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly, in order to show significant financial and programmatic progress. Payment requests must include sufficient documentation that details each expense. Acceptable documentation may include, but is not limited to, invoices, receipts, or detailed information regarding personnel costs, as determined by TDA, in its sole discretion. No in-kind donations or matching funds are

required. *Payment requests shall only be submitted by the Grantee to TDA for reimbursement after the Grantee purchases the approved budget item.*

B. Payment Schedule. In order to be eligible for reimbursement of a payment request, all reporting requirements must be current. Grant funds shall be paid according to the following schedule:

- a. Up to 90% of the total grant award may be disbursed provided the work for which payment is requested has been completed and proper documentation to substantiate the request has been submitted.
- b. The remaining 10% will only be disbursed once all reporting requirements have been met, including, but not limited to, the Equipment – Acquisition and Disposition of Property Form (if applicable) and the Final Performance Report.

C. Eligible Expenses. Generally, expenses that are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient performance and administration of the project are eligible. Grant funds may not be used to supplant normal business costs but instead must be used to cover the costs incurred for the approved proposed activities. Examples of eligible expenditures include:

1. Personnel costs – both salary and benefits directly related to project implementation;
2. Contracts – agreements made with a third-party to perform a portion of the award;
3. Travel – mileage reimbursement, transportation and lodging;
4. Capital Expenditures – Equipment that has a useful life of more than one year and a cost of more than \$5,000. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL TO TDA PRIOR TO EXPENDITURE/PURCHASE. Failure to secure written approval from TDA will result in disallowance of the cost;
5. Supplies and direct operating expenses – items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit with a useful life of less than one year, office supplies, postage, telecommunications, printing, etc. that are directly related to the project activities;
6. Controlled assets are defined as certain items valued \$500.00 - \$4,999.99 which must also be inventoried, [Controlled Property Listing](#); and
7. Direct operating expenses (other) – any expenses that do not fall into the other categories directly related to the proposed activities.

D. Ineligible Expenses. Certain expenses may be prohibited by state or federal law or determined to be ineligible by program guidelines. Some common ineligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:

1. Indirect Costs are limited to 8 percent of the total Federal funds provided under the award. If TDA does not take the full 8 percent of indirect costs, individual sub-applicants may claim the remaining portion of these costs at the discretion of TDA. At the time of the publication of this RFA, TDA will be taking the full 8 percent for indirect costs. Indirect costs will be deemed as an ineligible expense in both the grantee and subcontractor budgets;
2. Alcoholic beverages;
3. Entertainment;

4. Tips
5. Contributions, charitable or political;
6. Expenses falling outside of the contract period;
7. Expenses for items not listed in the project budget or that fail to meet the intent of the program;
8. Expenses that are not adequately documented;
9. Meal reimbursements related to travel, meetings, conferences or other events;
10. Advertising and Public Relations costs designed solely to promote the image of an organization, general logo, or general brand rather than eligible specialty crops are unallowable;
11. Coupon/incentive redemptions or price discounts. Costs associated with printing, distribution, or promotion of coupons/tokens or price discounts (i.e., a print advertisement that contains a clip-out coupon) are allowable only if they solely promote the specialty crop rather than promote or benefit a program or single organization; and
12. Costs associated with the use of trade shows, meeting rooms, display, demonstrations, exhibits, and the rental of space are allowable only if they solely promote the specialty crop. Cost sharing to promote both specialty crops and non-specialty crops is not allowable for these types of expenses.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Grant Awards.
 - a. The announcement of grant awards will be made by the date outlined in this RFA or as soon thereafter as practical. Selected applicants will receive a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) letter and the Grant Agreement from TDA. The NOGA is not legally binding and a grant agreement must be fully executed.
 - b. All grant awards are subject to the availability of appropriations and available funding, as well as necessary authorizations by the Texas Legislature.
 - c. TDA reserves the right to fund multiple projects partially or fully. TDA reserves the right to negotiate individual elements of any application and to reject any and all applications. Where more than one application is awarded and is acceptable for funding, TDA may request cooperation between grantees or revisions/adjustments to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state.
2. Applications.
 - a. TDA reserves the discretion and right to reject all applications and is not liable for costs incurred by the applicant in the development, submission, or review of the application; all costs incurred by the applicant prior to the effective date of a grant award agreement, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.
 - b. TDA reserves the discretion and right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if TDA deems any such action to be in the best interests of TDA and of the State of Texas. The decision of TDA will be deemed administratively final in this regard.

3. Public Information.

- a. All applications submitted under this RFA and for this program are subject to release as public information unless the application or specific parts of any such application can be shown to be exempt from the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.
- b. The applicant is responsible for clearly designating any portion of the application that contains proprietary information and must state the reason(s) the information is designated as such. Failure to mark any information as proprietary or confidential will result in the release of information on the assumption that the applicant has deemed that it is non-proprietary. In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall review the information deemed proprietary, provide notice to the applicant, and submit a request for opinion to the Office of the Attorney General for determination in accord with the Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. TDA shall take no position on the issue and it is the applicant's responsibility to file a brief supporting the request for opinion to withhold the proprietary or confidential information. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel regarding disclosure issues and to take appropriate precautions to safeguard trade secrets or any other proprietary information.

4. Conflict of Interest. All applicants are required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to the application submitted for consideration or funding under this grant program. Failure to disclose any such conflicts of interest, whether actual or potential, may result in the applicant's disqualification from consideration for a grant award, or if after award, the immediate termination by TDA of any grant agreement.

GENERAL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

1. Grantee (an applicant who receives a grant under this program) must comply with TDA's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the grantee to a subcontractor of any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by TDA and shall not relieve the grantee of its responsibilities to TDA for their performance.
2. All grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in the immediate termination of the grant award and/or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.
3. All grantees must keep a separate bookkeeping account with a complete record of all expenditures relating to the project. Records shall be maintained for three (3) years after the completion of the project or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. TDA and the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project at any time throughout the duration of the agreement and for three years immediately following completion of the project. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of

the retention period, then the records must be retained until authorized by TDA. TDA and the SAO shall have access to the physical locations related to project activities.

4. If the grantee has a financial audit performed during the time the grantee is receiving funds from TDA, upon request, TDA shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, and any schedules in which the grantee's funds are included.
5. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management, the Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS).
6. Additional terms, conditions, and grant award requirements may be included in the TDA final grant agreement. All grant awards under this RFA, if any, shall be subject to grant agreement and execution of a final TDA grant agreement containing all terms and conditions in addition to the foregoing requirements.

Texas Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Project Profile Template

This form was designed to be completed electronically. To ensure a fair and equitable competition, the required format is single-spaced, 10-point font with 1-inch margins, and no more than 18 pages long (excluding supporting documents and letters of support). Do not change the headings of this document. If needed, applicants may delete specific instructions in each section to help with the flow of information developed in response to the Request for Application (RFA). See the official RFA for submission instructions.

PRIMARY APPLICANT

Name of entity

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Name(s) of partner entities

PROJECT TITLE

Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less.

DURATION OF PROJECT

Start Date:	Start Date	End Date:	End Date
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PROJECT SUMMARY

Include a project summary of 250 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. A Project Summary provides a very brief (one sentence, if possible) description of your project. A Project Summary includes:

- 1. The name of the applicant organization that, if awarded a grant, will establish an agreement or contractual relationship with the Texas Department of Agriculture to lead and execute the project;*
- 2. A concise outline of the project's outcome(s); and*
- 3. A description of the general tasks to be completed during the project period to fulfill this goal.*

PROJECT PURPOSE

PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC ISSUE, PROBLEM OR NEED THAT THE PROJECT WILL ADDRESS

Provide a response in the space below.

PROVIDE A LISTING OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT THIS PROJECT HOPES TO ACHIEVE

Add more objectives by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete objectives that aren't necessary.

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

Objective 4

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Estimate the number of project beneficiaries: Enter the Number of Beneficiaries

Who will project beneficiaries be: Enter the type of Beneficiaries
Example "X crop" producers or students

Does this project directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers as defined in [7 CFR §760.107](#)? Yes ☐
No ☐

Does this project directly benefit beginning farmers as defined in [7 CFR §760.107](#)? Yes ☐
No ☐

Describe how the project results will be shared with the target audience, stakeholders and other interested parties beyond those directly involved in the project.

Provide a response in the space below.

STATEMENT OF SOLELY ENHANCING SPECIALTY CROPS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that this project **solely** enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops in accordance with [7 U.S.C. 1621](#). Further information regarding the definition of a specialty crop can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp.

☐

CONTINUATION PROJECT INFORMATION

If your project is continuing the efforts of a previously funded SCBGP project, address the following:

- Describe how this Project will differ from and build on the Previous Efforts

Provide a response in the space below.

- Provide a Summary (3 to 5 Sentences) of the Outcomes of the Previous Efforts

Provide a response in the space below.

- Provide Lessons Learned on Potential Project Improvements

What was previously learned from implementing this project, including potential improvements?

How are the lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes?

- Describe the Likelihood of the Project Becoming Self-Sustaining and Not Indefinitely Dependent on Grant Funds

Provide a response in the space below.

OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Did you submit this project to a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?

Yes

☐

No

☐

If Your Project is receiving or will potentially receive funds from another Federal or State Grant Program

Identify the Federal or State grant program(s).

Describe how the SCBGP project differs from or supplements the other grant program(s) efforts.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project)

WORK PLAN

Detail the steps it will take to complete the project, include who will complete each task and any resulting deliverable. The timeline should be progressive (including month and year) to show when each activity start and end. Be sure to include performance monitoring, data collection, outreach and reporting. Add additional lines if needed.

Start Date month/year	End Date month/year	Work to be completed and by who.
		Activity: Who: Deliverable:

		Activity: Who: Deliverable:
		Activity: Who: Deliverable:

EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

You must choose at least one of the eight outcomes listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#), which were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the performance of the SCBGP on a national level.

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

Select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable for this project from the listing below.

- ☐ **Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (required for marketing projects)
- ☐ **Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- ☐ **Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- ☐ **Outcome 4:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources
- ☐ **Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- ☐ **Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety
- ☐ **Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- ☐ **Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)

Provide at least one indicator listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#) and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator. Click on the hyperlink text above to find the indicators.

Provide a response in the space below.

DATA COLLECTION TO REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator in the space below.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

All expenses described in the Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP.

Budget Summary	
Expense Category	Funds Requested
Personnel	\$
Fringe Benefits	\$
Travel	\$
Equipment	\$
Supplies	\$
Contractual	\$
Other	\$

Total Budget	\$
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PERSONNEL

List the organization's employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Add more lines if needed.

#	Name/Title	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Personnel Subtotal	\$
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FRINGE BENEFITS

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBGP funds. Add more lines if needed.

#	Name/Title	Fringe Benefit Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Fringe Subtotal	\$
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TRAVEL

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy (See RFA for allowable costs related to travel at the Texas Department of Agriculture); in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. Rates may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>. Add more lines if needed.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

Travel Subtotal	\$
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CONFORMING WITH YOUR TRAVEL POLICY

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR Chapter 1, Subpart 31.2](#), as applicable.

☐

TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION

For each trip listed in the above table describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 2(Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 3(Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Add other Trips as necessary

EQUIPMENT

Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. "Special purpose equipment" is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities.

Rental of "general purpose equipment" must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant.

#	Item Description	Rental or Purchase	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				

Equipment Subtotal	\$
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EQUIPMENT JUSTIFICATION

For each Equipment item listed in the above table describe how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Add more equipment by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete equipment that isn't necessary.

Equipment 1:

Equipment 2:

Equipment 3:

Add other Equipment as necessary

SUPPLIES

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

Supplies Subtotal

\$

SUPPLIES JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT

Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant, each must be described separately. (Repeat this section for each contractor/consultant.) Please note indirect expenses are not allowable under this RFA.

ITEMIZED CONTRACTOR(S)/CONSULTANT(S)

#	Name/Organization	Hourly Rate/Flat Rate	Total Funds Requested for each contract
1			
2			
3			
4			

Contractual/Consultant Subtotal	
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CONFORMING WITH YOUR PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through .326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

☐

CONTRACTUAL JUSTIFICATION

Provide an itemized budget (personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, other, etc.) with appropriate justification. Describe the project activities each contractor or consultant will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project if the activities are not clearly outlined in the work plan. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2017/general-schedule>), provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, or other expenses.

Contractor/Consultant 1:

Contractor/Consultant 2:

Contractor/Consultant 3:

Add other Contractors/Consultants as necessary

OTHER

Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	Number of Units	Anticipated Date of Acquisition	Funds Requested

Other Subtotal	
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\$

OTHER JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each item listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

PROGRAM INCOME

Program income is gross income—earned by a recipient or sub-recipient under a grant—directly generated by the grant-supported activity, or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds), registration fees for conferences, etc.

Source/Nature of Program Income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income into the project to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops	Estimated Income

Program Income Total	
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COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Grant Program

Accounting System & Financial

Capability Questionnaire

PURPOSE

Recipients of Federal funds must maintain adequate accounting systems that meet the criteria outlined in 2 CFR §200, Subpart D, [Standards for Financial and Program Management](#). The responses to this questionnaire are used to assist in the Texas Department of Agriculture's evaluation of your accounting system to ensure the adequate, appropriate, and transparent use of Federal funds. Failure to comply with the criteria outlined in the regulations above may preclude your organization from receiving an award. This form applies to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization Name:	
Employer Identification Number:	
Authorized Organization Representative (AOR):	
Year the Organization was established:	
Number of Employees:	

GRANT STAFF INFORMATION

Provide the name of the project staff and number of years that they have been employed by the applicant organization.

Staff Member	Name	Number of Years
AOR		
Project Director		
Financial Point of Contact		

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Requirement	Yes	No
Is there a dedicated accountant or finance manager responsible for monitoring organizational funds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your organization have written accounting policies and procedures that meet the requirements associated with 2 CFR §200.302 ? <i>If yes, provide a copy of or a hyperlink to your organization's written accounting policies and procedures (e.g., payment procedures and budgeting process).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hyperlink (if available):		

Does your organization have a written account of its internal controls as required by [2 CFR §200.303](#)?

☐☐

If yes, provide a copy of or a hyperlink to your organization's written internal controls for Federal awards (e.g., segregation of duties).

Hyperlink (if available):

AUDIT FINANCIAL AND REPORTS

Requirement

Yes

No

Does your organization issue annual financial reports and/or plans?

☐☐

Has your organization been audited within the last 5 fiscal years?

☐☐

If yes, provide a copy of or a hyperlink to the audit report.

Hyperlink (if available):

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional financial information including expanding on responses in previous sections

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

X

AOR Signature

Date

Phone:

Email: